

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, SOPN, AG, SS
SUBJ: SAHARA: MOROCCAN "OCCUPATION OF MAURITANIA" BECOMES ALGERIAN
PROPAGANDA THEME

1. SUMMARY: MOROCCAN "OCCUPATION OF MAURITANIA" HAS BECOME ALGERIAN-
POLISARIO PROPAGANDA THEME. KING HASSAN SAID TO BE PLAYING LAST CARD
BY MASSING 20,000 TROOPS ON ALGERIAN-SAHARA FRONTIER PRIOR TO LAUN-
CHING ATTACK ON REFUGEE CAMPS, AND JOURNALIST WHO VISITED TINDOUF
NOTED ALGERIAN AIR SORTIES AS INDICATION OF HIGHER LEVEL OF ALGERIAN
PREPAREDNESS. POLISARIO CLAIMS THAT SENEGALESE AMONG MAURITANIANS
CAPTURED, AND PLACES RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIX CAPTURED FRENCH CITI-
ZENS ON MAURITANIA. END SUMMARY.

2. MAURITANIA "OCCUPIED:" IN PAST WEEK ALGERIAN MEDIA AND POLISARIO
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HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING THEME OF MOROCCAN "OCCUPATION" OF MAURITANIA.
THIS PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE LAUNCHED IN MANIFESTO PUBLISHED AUGUST 7
FOLLOWING JULY 28-30 MEETING OF POLISARIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND IN
PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY SAHRAOUI REPUBLIC DEFENSE MINISTER BRAHIM
GHALI IN "LIBERATED TERRITORIES" NEAR TINDOUF AUGUST 4. FOLLOWING
ARE MAIN PROPAGANDA POINTS:

A. GIVE POLISARIO'S DIPLOMATIC SUCCESSES, AND INCAPACITY OF MAURI-

TANIAN ARMY TO COPE WITH EL OUALI OFFENSIVE, MOROCCANS HAVE TAKEN CHARGE OF WAR IN MAURITANIA. MAURITANIAN PRISONERS' TESTIMONY THAT MOROCCAN OFFICERS HAVE TAKEN OVER KEY COMMAND POSITIONS FROM THEIR MAURITANIAN COUNTER-PARTS CITED IN THIS CONNECTION.

B. MUTUAL DEFENSE PACT UNDER WHICH MOROCCANS HAVE ENTERED MAURITANIA FULFILLS LONG-STANDING MOROCCAN OBJECTIVE OF ANNEXING MAURITANIA AND CREATING "GRAND MOROCCO FROM MEDITERRANEAN TO SENEGAL RIVER."

C. MAURITANIAN PEOPLE RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR SAHRAOUI BRETHREN ARE STRUGGLING WITH THEM TO BLOCK MOROCCAN AMBITIONS, AMBITIONS WHICH FED BY IMPERIALISM GENERALLY AND IN PARTICULAR BY FRENCH POLICY OF "ZONES OF TENSION" IN AFRICA. MAURITANIANS HAVE SHOWN DISPLEASURE THROUGH "POPULAR MANIFESTATIONS" AND REFUSAL OF TROOPS TO FIGHT AGAINST POLISARIO.

3. SASDAR DEFENSE MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE: IN ADDITION TO ELABORATING THEME OF MOROCCAN OCCUPATION OF MAURITANIA, SASDAR DEFENSE MINISTER GHALI MADE FOLLOWING POINTS IN HIS AUG 4 PRESS CONFERENCE. (40 FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING 10 FROM PARIS, ATTENDED):

A. KING HASSAN IN PROCESS OF "PLAYING HIS LAST CARD" BY SENDING 20,000 TROOPS, SUPPORTED BY PLANES AND TANKS, TO EASTERN FRONTIER OF SAHARA FOR PURPOSE OF ATTACKING REFUGEE CAMPS.

B. FRENCH PRISONERS TAKEN AT ZOUERAT MAY 1 ARE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAURITANIA. (GHALI REFUSED EVEN TO SAY IN SO MANY WORDS THAT POLISARIO HOLDING FRENCH AND TERMINATED CONFERENCE ABRUPTLY WHEN QUESTIONING BECAME TOO INTENSE.)
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C. PRESENCE OF SENEGALESE AMONG MAURITANIAN PRISONERS CAPTURED BY POLISARIO SHOWS THAT OULD DADDAH HAD TURNED TO HIS "NATURAL ALLY" FOR AID. (THIS COMMENT CAME IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THERE WERE SENEGALESE AMONG PRISONERS.)

4. FOREIGN JOURNALIST WHO ATTENDED PRESS CONFERENCE CONFIRMED ALGERIAN MEDIA REPORTS THAT ARMS DISPLAYED AND PRISONERS INTERVIEWED. IN JOURNALIST'S VIEW, CONFERENCE CONVENED TO CALL ATTENTION TO RECENT ALLEGED POLISARIO MILITARY SUCCESSES AT AARGUB AND TAN TAN, BUT MAIN INTEREST OF FRENCH PRESS WAS FRENCH PRISONER STORY.

5. IN GENERAL TERMS, JOURNALIST FOUND POLISARIO BETTER ORGANIZED, AND ALGERIANS APPARENTLY MORE ALERT MILITARILY, THAN IN PAST. ALGERIAN MIGS WERE FLYING SORTIES FROM TINDOUF AIRPORT DURING PERIOD OF PRESS CONFERENCE. GHALI, JOURNALIST SAID, APPEARED TO BE IN MID-40S AND GAVE IMPRESSION OF BEING SEASONED DESERT FIGHTER.

6. MILITARY COMMUNIQUE: RECENT POLISARIO COMMUNIQUE CLAIMS THAT 168 MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN AUGUST. COMMUNIQUE SUGGESTS THAT POLISARIO CONCENTRATING ITS ATTENTIONS ON MAURITANIA WITH BRIEF OCCUPATION OF ZELNACHIRETT (50 KILOMETERS FROM CHINGUETTI) AUG 1 AND ATTACKS AT CHINGUETTI AND OTHER LOCATIONS AUG 2. JOURNA-

LIST SAID THAT STRESS DURING GHALI'S PRESS CONFERENCE WAS ON
ATTACKS AT TAN TAN IN MOROCCO (AUG 4 ACCORDING TO COMMUNIQUE) AND
AARGUB (NOT MENTIONED IN COMMUNIQUE).

7. COMMENT: GIVEN RECENT HISTORY OF REGION, ALGERIAN-POLISARIO
STRESS ON "MAURITANIA OCCUPIED" THEME LOGICAL PROPAGANDA PLOY. IT IS
INTERESTING THAT POLISARIO MAKES NO EFFORT IN PROPAGANDA TO PORTRAY
SAHRAOUI AND MAURITANIANS AS ONE PEOPLE; UNTIL NOW, EMPHASIS HAS
BEEN ON TWO PEOPLES WITH COMMON OBJECTIVES.HAYNES

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